

Application No. 09/992,190
Amendment "C" dated December 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action mailed October 22, 2004

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the recent interview held on December 13, 2004. The following remarks are consistent with the issues discussed during the interview.

The latest Office Action mailed October 22, 2004, considered and rejected claims 1-38 in view of Lortz (U.S. Patent No. 6,349,410)¹.

As discussed during the interview, however, Lortz is not valid prior art as applied to the present case inasmuch as the present application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/900,417, which was filed on July 25, 1997, and inasmuch as Lortz only claims priority to a filing date of August 4, 1999.

Accordingly, inasmuch as Lortz has been disqualified and no other rejections remain unresolved or based on other art, Applicant respectfully submit that the pending application is now in condition for prompt allowance.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 29 day of December 2004.

Respectfully submitted,



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¹ It was not entirely clear what grounds were being used to reject claims 14-17 and 23, if any, though.